



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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Supporting live theatre in South Australia

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TWO BROTHERS

Red Phoenix Theatre and Holden Street Theatres

Holden Street Theatres – The Studio

Until 27 May

Review by Paige Mulholland

The scariest thing about “Two Brothers” is that it feels plausible. A story of political intrigue, familial betrayal, gendered and racial tensions and, at its heart, familial relationships, there are certainly many layers and plotlines flying to and fro, but the picture that it paints of contemporary Australia is a truthful one. Complete with an excellent cast and a strong creative team, this Adelaide premiere is one not to miss – unless, of course, you’re afraid of a little controversy.

“Two Brothers” follows, you guessed it, two brothers, similar in intelligence and family loyalty, but fiercely divided morally and politically. When James “Eggs” Benedict, in his role as Minister for Home Security, orders the army to turn away from a sinking boat full of refugees and 250 innocents are killed, his brother Tom Benedict, prominent refugee advocate, is forced to put aside his close relationship with his brother and act, for better or for worse. As the play progresses, the fight gets dirtier, the conspiracies go higher, and the fallout gets more dangerous.

In addition to this perilous, fraternal relationship, “Two Brothers” also examines the relationship between their sons, free spirit Harry Benedict and naval officer Lachlan Benedict, and the lives of Tom’s partner Angela and Eggs’ wife Fiona. With so many complex characters and subplots, the play is a long one, clocking in at almost two-and-a-half hours with a short interval. With such heavy content, a show this long could easily feel exhausting, but the dynamic script and complex characters keep audiences rapt. To cut any content from the show would be to damage the deep relationships the audience form with the characters.

The talented cast make “Two Brothers” easy to follow and hard to look away from. Brothers Brant Eustice and Michael Eustice are the perfect choice to play the titular two brothers; not only do they look like brothers, but they act like brothers too, both in the easy, friendly scenes and those that are dark and tense. However the Eustice brothers also prove that they don’t need to share DNA with someone to build chemistry – they also fit in seamlessly with the rest of the cast. Fahad Farooque gives a heartbreaking performance as Hazeem Al Ayad and Alicia Jaye is spine-chillingly calculating and cold as Eggs’ advisor Jamie. Tracey Walker portrays the fierce, protective Angela with an ever-present warmth and passion, and Lyn Wilson is jarringly believable as the well-spoken, well-educated Fiona Benedict. Joshua Mensch and Joshua Coldwell also give excellent performances as cousins Harry Benedict and Lachlan Benedict, embodying the feelings of professional and moral uncertainty felt by most every young adult. Cheryl Douglas rounds out the consistently excellent cast, giving a well-rehearsed performance in a variety of smaller roles.

The only weak element in the otherwise outstanding production was the sound design. While the actors were all easy to hear and the audio levels were always comfortable, the choice of music was erratic and didn’t contribute to the themes of the play. Also, although the music faded out appropriately, it often began suddenly and jarred the audience out of the action, instead of keeping them alert and excited as it should.

“Two Brothers” is an excellent offering from Red Phoenix Theatre – proof that a commitment to bringing new content to Adelaide and to confronting harsh realities and controversial topics pays off. Whether or



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not you're politically-minded, "Two Brothers" will pull at your heartstrings and awaken your curiosity. Leave any Trump-loving family members at home, though, unless you want your own tale of familial political unrest developing on the car ride home.